

23. Departure

The time for saying goodbye then was dawning and on February 11, 1964, I had to tell Mr. Van 't Hullenaar that, due to my departure for Canada, I could not accept the appointment as manager of the administration for the conversion from coal to natural gas. At the same time, I requested my dismissal as of April 1, 1964. He was not very happy with my decision and took no trouble to hide that from me. From the time of that discussion on he had no further contact with me. The matter of the conversion was taken over by the assistant manager, Mr. Wouterse. So at that time we had to find a replacement on short notice.

The situation created considerable hustle and bustle. We had to say goodbye to all our friends and acquaintances. I also still had to make a number of home visits, as well as look after all kinds of other things, such as the shipment of our furniture, etc. I probably suffered from overwork and extreme nervousness, because a few days before our departure I noticed when I woke up in the morning that I did not hear anything anymore. I was completely deaf. My wife and I were tremendously concerned because under these circumstances we could not and ought not to depart.

I immediately contacted the specialist, Dr. Haquebort. He was quite familiar with my case because a few years before he had sent me once to the academic hospital in Groningen in order to consult Prof. Huizinga concerning the deafness in my left ear. He had also operated on our son, Bill, who suffered from an ear infection when he was still a baby. He told me then that the deafness was caused by nervousness and that my hearing was sure to return. "As far as that is concerned, you can safely go to Canada," he said. He then read the report of Prof. Huizinga. Not until after that did he inform

me that a calcification process was going on in my hearing and that Prof. Huizinga suspected complete deafness to result in the long run. Fortunately, my hearing returned after a few days. The left ear remained deaf but the right ear recovered completely. The Great Physician had answered our prayers.

Shipping of the furniture and other household effects had to be done by experienced people, of course, and the Department of Emigration had recommended someone who had a good reputation in this branch of business. A large wooden container of prescribed dimensions was delivered. All furniture such as beds, tables, chairs, etc. were packed therein under the supervision of a Customs official. While these wooden crates may have been of respectable size, they were not quite large enough to take everything we owned along. Our bicycles and the moped had to be sold; only Betsy's bicycle, being still quite new, we did not want to miss. Yet Betsy has never been able to use it in Canada. It seemed to be much too dangerous to us because here there were no bicycle paths such as



At the Kruizinga's home in Ridderkerk, close to Rotterdam, where we stayed for a couple of days prior to our departure for Canada

exist in The Netherlands. At that time, The Netherlands was the pre-eminent bicycle country in Europe, while Canada was completely geared to the automobile. Yet the crates were so roomy that, according to Mr. Ten Brinke, in Houston they were used as sleighs in winter. Having fastened two de-barked trees underneath the crate, boards were nailed to the inside to serve as seats, while in the middle a small stove was placed for heating. In this manner, several families went to church together on Sundays. In 1950, nobody owned a car yet.

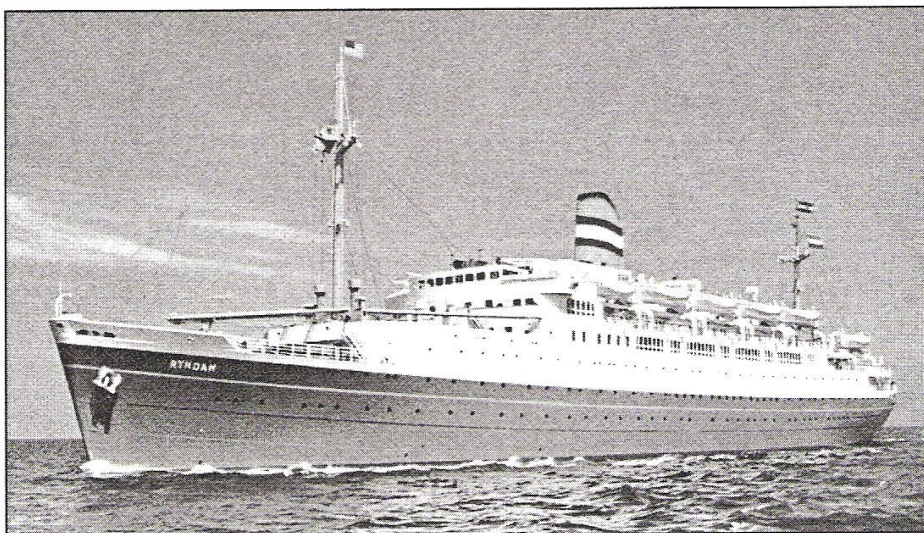


Saying goodbye in Enschede
to my youngest brother,
Johannes (Joop).

We had to travel to Rotterdam where we were to embark on the *S.S. Rijndam* of the *Holland Amerika Lijn*, a very large passenger ship, as you can see on the pictures, holding more than a thousand passengers. We travelled there by train after saying goodbye to our relatives. Only a few of the closest relatives were allowed to briefly accompany us on board. Ours were my wife's oldest brother, Hendrik, and his daughter, Ankie, and my oldest brother, Lambert. So we went aboard, but not until after the soles of our shoes were cleaned. And after that we still had to walk over a special runner. This was because of the "hoof and mouth" disease prevailing among the cattle in The Netherlands at

that time. We also were absolutely forbidden to take along fruit, flowers or dairy products.

The afternoon of March 31, 1964 at 4:00 p.m. we set out to sea, direction France, because some French emigrants with a Quebec destination had to be picked up there. When we sailed out of the Rotterdam harbour, the Dutch national anthem was played. That touched a tender chord and there were several passengers with a tear in their eyes.



S.S. Rijndam - our emigration ship - 15,015 gross tons

The next morning, April 1st, we arrived at Le Havre. The Frenchmen came aboard there and we were off to England. There, too, some emigrants were to come along. The Rijndam sailed to Southampton, but did not anchor in the harbour. The new passengers came with a smaller boat and were shipped aboard on the open sea.

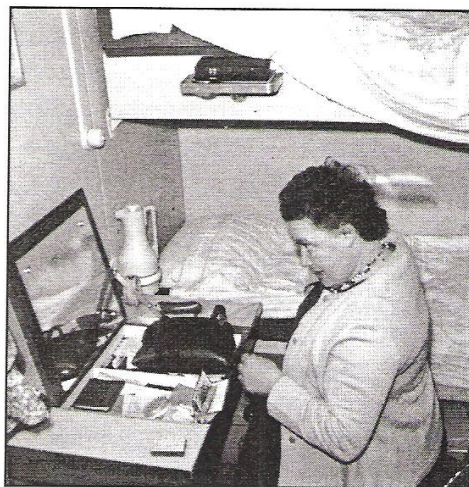
Somehow the French people wound up opposite us at the dining room table. Great fun! We did not understand any French and they, of course, knew no Dutch. We did not have any conversation at all. While it does not



Non-existing dinner conversation with the French people

show very clearly on the picture, the people opposite us at the table are French.

No sooner were we on the ocean then a considerable storm broke out. I, fortunately, was not bothered by it, but my wife and children did not feel overly exuberant that day. But by evening everyone had returned to normality so that, at last, the time for relaxation had arrived. We had a cabin with two bunk beds, one for ourselves and one for the two girls. Bill had to sleep in another cabin he shared with two other unmarried men. After the storm we all were called out for a safety drill. We had to gather at our designated lifeboat, properly equipped with our PFDs, which then we called life jackets.



*"Mirror, mirror on the wall"
My wife beautifying herself in our cabin*



Safety drill - ready for anything!

How I enjoyed those ten days of rest! All the rush and hustle were past. For a short time we were delivered from the cares for the future. It was a time for lazing around and for nothing but enjoyment. The ship was a great floating hotel providing a superabundance of food and all kinds of other luxuries. We did not meet any acquaintances on the ship. Most passengers were emigrants like us. Yet there also were



Relaxing on the deck (my wife on the right)

several passengers who went to visit their children who had emigrated earlier, part of the flood of emigrants in the period from 1948 to 1954. Later on, this flood diminished somewhat, I believe. Many of the parents in The Netherlands already had saved some money and now wanted to visit their children. And they went by boat since flying was more difficult and air transportation was not yet as common as it is now.

The children amused themselves fabulously and so did we. We did not have to do anything. It was like "*Luilekkerland*" which, translated literally, means "lazy tasty land" (perhaps the English word to use would be "CandyLand") – food and drink was prepared for us and was served on time. We made the most of the situation and indulged in all that was offered which resulted in my gaining a pound a day. At the time I embarked, I weighed 120 pounds. At our arrival in Montreal, the scales tipped at 130!

Much of the time we lazed around on the upper deck, reading a book or a magazine such as we found in the library of the ship. In the evening, entertainment was provided for the passengers and sometimes games were played which were not familiar to us, such as Bingo. We lived somewhere in a world previously totally unknown to us. Sometimes the waves were very high. Personally I

enjoyed that very much. I liked to stand in the prow and sway with the movement of the ship.

On April 10, very early in the morning, we arrived at Montreal. We were not allowed to leave the ship immediately for reasons that were not communicated to us. We had to wait several hours and that was not enjoyable especially because, after we had waited for an hour, the ship's engines were turned off thus causing the lights to go out as well. The water supply also was closed down which became a problem especially for mothers with babies. Aside from such details, however, it had been a splendid voyage with first class accommodation.

At last we were allowed to disembark. I was advised to make sure that our crate was on board and that it would be unloaded. I went to the official who was supervising the unloading. I told him what the number of our crate was and asked him if he could check and make sure that it would be unloaded. He did check his papers and assured me that everything was in order and the crate would be unloaded. We were met by Mrs. Heeren of the Dutch embassy. She handed us \$50.00 as landing money, which represented our total fortune. Today that would be equal to at least a week's wages. She told us that she was charged with our care until we boarded the train for Toronto.

Together with other immigrants, we went by bus to a restaurant where she offered us a delicious meal on behalf of the Dutch embassy. She also gave us tickets for the train to Toronto. At the railway station, I did not know exactly where we had to board the train. I tried to ask one of the officials who was walking around there, but he did not understand me, nor I him, except that I guessed he asked me what my nationality was. When I told him I was Dutch, he grabbed my arm and brought me to a Negro. To my utter astonishment, this man spoke fluent Dutch. "Are you a Dutchman?" I asked. "No," he replied, "but I have studied in The Netherlands and attended a university there." I was greatly relieved to find someone I could understand. "Your Dutch is excellent," I praised him, as indeed it was. The compliment made the man blush


visibly. I discovered, somewhat to my surprise, that Negroes also have red blood. It was late in the evening already before the train departed. We were shown to our seats by a person we did not understand because he was a Frenchman. But fortunately Betsy, our eldest daughter, was fairly familiar with the language and Willem also had learned a mouthful. My wife and I, however, had only received a few lessons where we learned some sentences such as "How are you doing?" We had to try and sleep in the train that night but were somewhat less than successful. At last, early in the morning, we arrived at Toronto. There, to our great astonishment, a large group of family members was already waiting for us. What a happy reunion that was!

In various cars we all were transported to our initial abode, which was in the basement of Truus' home on Church Street in Weston. Truus herself had learned to drive after the passing away of her husband, Albert (Abs) Brasz, who drowned in 1954 when the Humber River in Toronto flooded during Hurricane Hazel. The house, located at the bank of the Humber, was completely washed away at that time. Truus and her children had been rescued from the house by boat already. The men were waiting for the return of the boat, but the three men who were left behind (the husband of Truus, the husband of her oldest daughter, Mr. Wilson, and a Dutch boarder from Hengelo) could not be saved. The house, which did not have a proper foundation, suddenly was washed away and was smashed against a bridge over the river. All three men drowned. Truus, who was 45 at that time, after depending on others for transportation for ten years, learned to drive and obtained her license when she was 55.

It goes without saying that it made her very proud. She insisted that her beloved sister should sit with her in the car. But she was not yet an accomplished driver and she was very nervous in the heavy traffic of Toronto's inner city. That's how she missed the right way to Weston and eventually they ended up in Markham, all the way to the east of the city. My wife, unaware of all these things, did not hear until after a few hours drive that her sister had driven the wrong way. But once Truus realized her mistake it did not take long

for her to find the right way.

In the meantime, the others had been home for an hour already and at last we all started to become concerned. There was joy when at last they arrived and my wife told us that she had experienced a very beautiful trip and that she had enjoyed it very much. Everything was so different than in The Netherlands. In the town we came from, practically all houses featured roofs with red tiles and the labourers' homes were all of the same style. Here all roofs were of a different colour and the houses also differed in size and style.

s.s. "RIJNDAM"		<i>Holland-Amerika Lijn</i>	Tourist Class
Captain Th. Busser, Commander			Thursday, April 9th, 1964
DINNER			
Zalm Salade	Hors d'Oeuvre	Salmon Salad	
Radijs - Rauwe Wortelen		Carrot Sticks - Red Radishes	
Rijpe- en Groene Olijven		Ripe and Green Olives	
Hollandse Groentesoep	Soup	Dutch Vegetable Soup	
Gebraden Varkensvlees	Relevé	Roast Quarter of Pork with Gravy	
Gestoofde Tomaten	Vegetables	Stewed Tomatoes	
Witte Kool in Melksaus		Creamed White Cabbage	
Gebakken - Puree	Potatoes	Château - Mashed	
Salade - Komkommer Dressing	Salad	Lettuce - Cucumber Egg Dressing	
Gele Pruimen	Compote	Yellow Plums	
Ijscrème - Gebak Wafels	Dessert	Ice Cream Chantilly - London Fruit Cake Waffles	
Vers Fruit	Fruit	Assorted Fresh Fruit	
Koffie - Thee	Beverages	Coffee - Tea	

One of the dinner menus during our voyage